



# Gloucester Health Department

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Annual Report 2015



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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**Gloucester Health Department**



# Health Department Annual Report 2015

## Our Mission

The Mission of the Gloucester Board of Health and Health Department is to promote physical and mental health, prevent disease, injury and disability in the City of Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Employing a comprehensive range of skills and a dedicated team of public health professionals, we provide effective services to improve the quality of life of Gloucester residents.

The Gloucester Board of Health consists of five knowledgeable citizen-volunteers who are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council for three-year terms of service.

As statewide leaders in public health programming, the Gloucester Board of Health and Health Department have spearheaded issues such as:

- Providing annual vaccination clinics for influenza and pneumonia prevention
- Creation of programs, such as the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative, to address issues related to the impacts of substance abuse
- Coordination of partnerships that promote regional active living and healthy eating initiatives
- Providing dental care with a focus on children's long-term oral health
- Participation in regional public health preparedness coalitions
- Enforcement of state and local environmental health regulations and policies
- Utilizing inspectional services to ensure safe food, water, homes and beaches
- Presenting public health education and outreach forums for matters of community concern



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Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Gloucester Health Department

## Highlights

- *Board of Health and Health Department mission, staff and Board Members*
- *Review of Department Responsibilities and Activities*
- *Special Projects and Programs*
- *Overview of Department Budget*

## Inside this Report:

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## Dedication to Service

The strength of the Department continues to be its staff of dedicated individuals who have, collectively, provided almost 100 years of service to the City of Gloucester.

In 2015, the Gloucester Board of Health convened **13 public meetings** of the full Board, where **48 items** were discussed in addition to standing agenda items that include review and approval of minutes, public oral communication

and discussions regarding concerns of the Board. The Board also hosted a **panel discussion on the health benefits of fluoride** in the drinking water supply.

The Board's **Septic Review Subcommittee**, chaired by Board member Fred Cowan and attended by fellow Board members Robert Harris and Joseph Rosa, **met eight times** to review **19 items**.

## Board of Health and Health Department Staff

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### Board of Health Members

Richard Sagall, MD, Chairperson

Robert Harris, Vice-Chairperson

Frederick Cowan

Joseph Rosa

Claudia Schweitzer

Recorder: Bobbi Orlando

### Health Department Staff

#### Central Services

Max Schenk, Assistant Director

Noreen M. Burke, M.P.P., Director †

Kelley Ries, BSN, Public Health Nurse

Lianne Cook, R.N., M.P.H., Public Health Nurse †

Christopher Sargent, Housing Inspector

Rosalie Nicaastro, Food Inspector

Thorsen Akerley, BA, MS Sanitarian/Title 5 Inspector

Erin Kirchner, B.A., RS, Sanitarian/Title 5 Inspector †

Joanne Christopher, Principal Account Clerk

#### Healthy Gloucester Collaborative

Joan A. Whitney, M.S.W., M.A., Director

Cristina Hildebrand, MPH

Jenna Melvin, B.S., M.B.A., Grants Specialist

Anastasia Satterfield, B.A., Principal Clerk

#### Children's Dental Center

Jill Marston, B.A., Administrator

Kim M. Cabral, Dental Assistant

Paula Cary, R.D.H., Hygienist

Benjamin Polan, D.M.D., Dentist

† Represents staff who have transitioned from the Department in the previous year.

## Environmental Health: Onsite Wastewater Systems

Many Gloucester properties are serviced by the municipally funded, sanitary sewer system. However, approximately 3000 privately owned septic systems remain.

Their design approval, installation and operational maintenance remain under the regulatory oversight of the Health Department.

Since upgrading of onsite systems can be expensive the City, through funding from the Mass Department of Environmental Protection, offers interest-free, 15-year, transferable loans to eligible homeowners that can cover the full cost of an upgrade.

Process	2013	2014	2015
Soil evaluations witnessed	26	34	30
System or site variances were addressed	96	106	103
Systems that are undergoing improvement to meet Title 5 standards	33	49	45

## Beach Water Quality Testing

Gloucester has several beautiful beaches that provide enjoyment to the residents and visitors every summer.

In accordance with Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations, all Gloucester public beaches are regularly tested from June through September for compliance with state safety standards.

Given the popularity and extended-season use of our beaches, the Health Department performs additional water quality testing beyond those paid for

by the State. Each beach is tested for *Enterococci* bacteria. Should a beach exceed the 104 Enterococci colonies per 100 ml of marine water, they are required to close.

In **2013**, 60 tests were performed with two closures required as a precaution.

In **2014** 68 tests were performed with no closures.

In **2015** 68 tests were performed with no closures required due to exceedances in bacteria levels.

### BEACHES TESTED BY THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT INCLUDE:

- ✓ GOOD HARBOR
- ✓ WINGAERSHEEK
- ✓ NILES
- ✓ PLUM COVE
- ✓ HALF MOON
- ✓ CRESSY'S
- ✓ PAVILION

## Housing and State Sanitary Code

### Rentals, Hotels, Motels and Public Campgrounds



The Department ensures the safety and sanitary requirements for all rental housing units, recreational campgrounds and Gloucester-based hotels, motels and inns. Rental unit inspections are performed, at minimum, every six years and the number of inspections performed each year can vary, accordingly.

Process	2013	2014	2015
Occupancy Permits	328	510	237
Lodging/Hotel/Motel Permits	38	38	38
Public Campground	1	1	1

## Retail Food Service Establishments: Preparation and Sale

Helping to ensure that our restaurants, businesses that provide food, or events where food is served is prepared properly and served safely is a responsibility that the Health Department takes very seriously.

Using State and Federal regulations, the Department inspects and licenses food stores, restaurants, caterers, mobile food vendors and temporary events where food is served. Inspections for the over 300 permittees occur twice per year, with follow-up inspections performed as needed. All **37 food complaints** received by the Department in 2015 were investigated. By increasing education and outreach efforts, the need for issuing citations has fallen considerably over the last two years.

Process	2013	2014	2015
Inspections Performed	700	625	<b>739</b>
Citations Issued	30	6	<b>6</b>
Stores	68	68	<b>63</b>
Caterers	13	6	<b>8</b>
Food Service Establishments	162	164	<b>166</b>
Residential	14	14	<b>13</b>
Mobile Food	68	46	<b>47</b>
Temporary	73	62	<b>69</b>
Frozen Dessert	9	9	<b>6</b>
Total	407	375	<b>378</b>

## Tobacco Sales and Control

The fall of 2015 saw the beginning of the discussion regarding additional changes to the Board of Health's regulations related to the sale of tobacco. Raising the minimum age of sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 years of age is on the Board's agendas for 2016, as well as requiring that establishments that allow smoking in outdoor seating areas post their policy on their entrances.

The Health Department continues its partnership with the North Shore/Cape Ann Tobacco Alcohol Policy Program conducts regular compliance checks of all establishments permitted to sell tobacco products in Gloucester. In 2015, 32 establishments were checked and 7 were found in violation of regulations.



## Complaint Investigations

In 2015, approximately **260** complaints were received, either by phone or in person, and investigated.

These include, but are not limited to, complaints related to housing, food service establishments, as well as environmental complaints associated with water quality, odors, trash,

rodents, chemicals, drainage, and demolition, property use perceived as being inappropriate, presence of lead, asbestos, mold/moisture, and concerns re: respiratory, skin or internal conditions, hoarding, bed bugs and other pests.



## Other Permits

The Health Department is responsible for providing inspections and complaint investigation services for a number of businesses and activities whose work intersects with best interests of overall public health protection.



Permit	2013	2014	2015
Body Art Establishment	2	2	2
Body Art—Artist	4	6	4
Campground	1	1	1
System Installer	43	43	37
Dumpster—Individual	396	396	383
Dumpster—Company	10	10	7
Dumpster—Temp	1	2	5
Funeral Director	3	3	3
Garbage Removal Truck	24	24	22
Hotel/Motel	15	15	15
Laundromat	3	3	3
Night Soil Truck	21	21	19
Recreational Camp for Children	6	7	7
Septic Transfer Station	1	1	1
Stable	12	12	13
Swimming Pool	14	14	14
Tanning	2	2	2
Tobacco Sales	31	31	31

	2014	2015
Babesiosis	3	5
Campylobacteriosis	6	18
Giardiasis	1	1
Group A streptococcus	1	Less than 5
Group B streptococcus	5	Less than 5
Haemophilus influenza	5	11
Hepatitis C Confirmed	19	34
Hepatitis C Probable	25	12
Influenza	26	55
Legionellosis	1	0
Lyme Disease Confirmed	14	10
Lyme Disease Probable	7	4
Pertussis	2	Less than 5
Salmonella	11	6
Streptococcus pneumonia	5	0
Latent TB	20	10

## Vaccination Clinics

For a number of years, the Health Department has provided public flu vaccination clinics to anyone over 6 months of age. Through partnerships that included Gloucester School Nurses, local businesses, not-for-profit agencies and Medical Reserve Corps volunteers, **over 1,900 residents** received influenza vaccinations in the **32 clinics** that were provided.

## Communicable Disease Surveillance

The Health Department, through its Public Health Nurse, works with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health investigating and monitoring communicable diseases in the community.

These cases do not include many other instances of illness reported to the Department ranging from norovirus infections to animal bites and potential rabies.





## Animal Inspections

On behalf of the Board of Health, the Animal Inspector implements measures to protect against the spread of disease in situations involving animal to human contact. *No cases of rabies were confirmed in 2015.*

In the last year, the Animal Inspector, in co-operation with the Animal Control Officer at the Gloucester Police Department, investigated reports of bites/scratches from cats, dogs, bats, skunks and raccoons. Increases in quarantine numbers are due in part to improvements in tracking and reporting processes, as well as a sharp increase in the number of dogs purchased as pets.

Routine inspections are also made of all hoofed animals and suspect disease cases are investigated. Permitting and annual inspections are performed at all horse stables to ensure compliance with regulations.

Process	2014	2015
Ten-Day Quarantines issued for Dogs, Cats, and Horses	54	91
Forty-Five Day Quarantines	53	57
Six-Month Quarantines	19	22
Rabies Tests	8	16
Barn Inspections	12	13



## Substance Abuse Prevention —

Healthy Gloucester Collaborative (HGC) is a state and federal grant-funded community coalition established in 2005 by the Health Department. The HGC mission is to increase the health and well-being of Gloucester residents by reducing illicit substance use and prescription medication abuse. In 2015 HGC:

- Expanded substance abuse prevention efforts regionally and gained national recognition of community partnership efforts.
- Convened educators, local officials, law enforcement, business leaders and health professionals from five surrounding communities to work together and further impact the fight against substance abuse as a multi-year prevention partnership. The goal is to promote prevention of youth substance use and abuse regionally, and will help communities enter into a thoughtful regional assessment to develop sustainable best practices collaboratively.
- Gained national recognition of Gloucester's wide network of prevention through the expansion of the SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment) program geared to identify individuals with early "at risk" alcohol and drug use.
- Produced public service announcements on drugged driving.
- Continued support of the City of Gloucester Medications Disposal Program which began in 2008.
- Continued support of the First-Responder Nasal Narcan Program and the GFD On-Line Opioid Overdose Data Tracking System, used as a state-wide model.
- Staffed the Gloucester Middle and High School aged youth leadership program known as the HGC Gloucester Youth Council. The focus of the program is on developing youth peer leadership skills to increase healthy decisions and reduce youth substance abuse.
- Joined with the Gloucester Licensing Board to train all Alcohol licensees in the city on best practices to restrict alcohol access to minors.
- Facilitated the High-Risk Task Force, comprised of multiple sectors meeting monthly to coordinate care and treatment of the most vulnerable citizens in the City.



## Children's Dental Center

The Children's Dental Center is overseen by a site administrator, the Board of Health and Health Department Assistant Director. It provides oral health services and hygiene education to underserved children from one year of age to age 20.

All who have Mass Health (Medicaid) or Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP) insurance are welcomed, and the program is exclusively funded by reimbursements. Bus transportation is made available from the public schools to the Center which has served the children of Cape Ann since 2002. The Center is located at the Curtis Clark Senior Building in affordable space provided through the generous support of the Gloucester Housing Authority.

Process	2013	2014	2015
Number of Patients (total)	1300	1658	1652
Number of Procedures	4196	4604	4564
Cleanings	946	933	967
Fluoride Treatments	889	901	938
Exams	927	1033	1085
Fillings	396	396	601
Sealant Treatments	416	578	297
X-Rays Taken	502	561	435
Space Maintainers	6	8	22
Extractions	114	54	63

## Public Health Emergency Preparedness

In 2015, the Mass Department of Public Health transferred fiscal responsibility for distributing grant funding to newly contracted, regional groups called Health and Medical Coordinating Coalitions (HMCCs). An HMCC is a formal regional collaboration among public health and healthcare organizations to prepare for and respond to an emergency, mass casualty or other catastrophic health event.

The North Shore Cape Ann Emergency Preparedness Coalition, which includes Gloucester, continues to carry out their preparedness and response activities to ensure compliance with state and federal mandates. The North Shore Cape Ann Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) works with area communities to recruit and train volunteers to support regional emergency response and community-wide (non-emergency) activities throughout the year. MRC volunteers come from medical AND non-medical backgrounds and can be utilized for community events including athletic events (such as the Boston Marathon or local triathlons), flu clinics and staffing shelters.

Between January 1, 2015 and February 5, 2016, the NSCAMRC MRC reported 28 activities, of which: 3 were emergency responses, 24 strengthened public health, 24 served a vulnerable population, 25 supported non-emergency community events, 25 developed/strengthened the MRC unit, 23 improved community preparedness/resilience, and 24 trained/exercised to improve unit or community response capacity/capability.

**28** Total Number of Activities Reported

**2,278** Total Number of MRC Participants

**2,415** Total Number of Hours Contributed

**\$58,312.02** Economic Value of Contribution





## Mass in Motion: Cape Ann

Since 2009 Gloucester has been one of 10 Massachusetts communities to participate in the “Mass in Motion” program funded by Mass Department of Public Health, as well as by Blue Cross/Blue Shield and others.

The program is managed by Stephen Winslow and is a partnership of the City Health and Community Development Departments.

The program continues to move forward on implementing its FY 2016 Work Plan. Stephen Winslow attended the MA DOT “Complete Streets Training” and will be working within Gloucester (and perhaps Manchester) to create policies, plans and grant applications to take advantage of this program. Mass in Motion - Cape Ann connected the Backyard Growers (BYG) program to the Rockport School Gardening program who has committed to use the BYG gardening program in the spring.

The Open Door and BYG have secured a “Farm to School Grant” that focuses on encouraging students to eat more fresh, local fruits and vegetables. Mr. Winslow went to the Western MA Food Processing Center in Greenfield to learn about their communal / commercial kitchen to help assess if such a facility would be valuable to Cape Ann.



## Hoarding Task Force

Given the public attention on the issue and the complex challenges that hoarding can present to public and social service organizations, in 2009 the Gloucester Health Department worked with partners in creating the Cape Ann Hoarding Task Force.

In partnership with the Gloucester Housing Authority, SeniorCare of the North Shore and representatives from regional police and fire the Task Force identifies potential hoarders and those suffering in conditions of self-created squalor and attempts to link them to resources and appropriate referrals. Representatives from regional Police, Fire, and Building departments, as well as those from Mental Health and Social Service providers and Faith Groups, are active Task Force members.

In 2015, 8 cases of hoarding and/or squalor were investigated. Recognizing that property owners and families could benefit



from understanding not only the condition of hoarding, but also the legal and enforcement aspect of hoarding response, the Hoarding Task Force began the process of organizing an outreach campaign that will focus on property owners of three or more units per building. Information packets regarding hoarding, its impacts and sources of support, will be sent so that property owners can be informed as to their rights and responsibilities when they discover that a tenant is a hoarder. The information packets will be sent in spring of 2016.

## Special Issues and Initiatives - 2015

### First-Annual Diaper Drive

In partnership with the Mayor's Office and The Open Door Food Pantry, the Health Department held their first diaper drive to benefit families of the Open Door. Diaper need is the struggle to provide babies with clean, dry diapers. A lack of diapers can affect children and families' emotional welfare, economics, health, and educational opportunities. With the generosity and compassion from the community, 3,528 diapers and 27 packages of wipes were donated.



### Safe Sharps Disposal

In addition to the Sharps Disposal Kiosk located at AGH, two MDPH funded Sharps Disposal Kiosks have been supplied to Gloucester to provide residents with a safe site to disposal of used sharps. A public service announcement and educational flyer was released by the office of Chief of Police Leonard Campanello informing residents to call the non-emergency police line if sharps are found disposed of on a public way.

Raising awareness and providing safe sharps disposal education to the public and at risk populations continues to be a priority for the Public Health Nurse to prevent transmission of blood borne pathogens. The two new Sharps Disposal Kiosk Locations are located at the North Shore Health Project and the Gloucester Police Department.

### Board of Health Panel Discussion on Fluoride

After several discussions at Board of Health meetings, On October 19, 2015 at the Kyrouz Auditorium of City Hall, the Board presented a panel discussion on the use and benefits of fluoride in the public drinking water system. Board of Health Chair, Dr. Richard Sagall, led the discussion that included fellow Board members, as well as Dr. John Fisher, DDS, dentist and trustee of the Massachusetts Dental Society; Gloucester pediatrician Dr. Brian Orr, MD; Dr. William Bebrin, DMD, a dentist and orthodontist with a practice in Gloucester, Cape Ann physician Dr. Candace Thompson, MD, and Dr. Myron Allukian Jr., DDS, MPH, Associate Professor of Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine.

The discussion was presented prior to the elections in November, where a non-binding referendum question was on the ballot asking residents to decide if they wanted the addition of fluoride to the municipal water supply to remain in place. Two-thirds of Gloucester citizens at the polls voted *yes* to continue adding fluoride as a universal means of helping to prevent tooth decay.

### Proposed Changes in Tobacco Regulations

In 2015 the Board of Health began gathering information in order to deliberate on proposed changes to the Board's regulations on the selling of tobacco and restrictions on tobacco use in the workplace. The Board, in collaboration with the North Shore/Cape Ann Tobacco Alcohol Policy Program, is considering raising the minimum age for the purchase of tobacco and nicotine delivery products from 18 years old, to 21. In addition, the Board is also proposing that restaurants that provide outdoor seating, post a sign at their entrances stating whether, or not, they allow smoking in those areas.

## Health Department Budget

	2013	2014	2015
<b>Expenses (Total)</b>	\$393,701.00	\$410,816.00	<b>\$449,710.00</b>
<b>Personnel</b>	\$386,853.00	\$404,048.00	<b>\$442,942.00</b>
<b>Ordinary Maintenance</b>	\$ 6,848.00	\$ 6,768.00	<b>\$ 6,768.00</b>
<b>Revenues from Fees and Permits</b> (Based upon the city's accounting system for revenue information)	\$120,000.00	\$128,000.00	<b>\$145,000.00</b>

### Grant Funded and Revolving Account Programs

#### \$194,984 - Public Health Emergency Preparedness

- **\$170,645** - North Shore-Cape Ann Public Health Emergency Preparedness. Funds staff, planners, communications equipment, fiscal support, training exercises and drills.
- **\$7,500** - North Shore-Cape Ann Public Health Emergency Preparedness. Grant originates with FEMA through MEMA a Citizen Corps Program for the purpose of building the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) capacity during public health emergencies throughout the North Shore and Cape Ann.
- **\$13,340** - North Shore-Cape Ann Public Health Emergency Preparedness. Grant for the purpose of assisting the North Shore-Cape Ann Emergency Preparedness Coalition in preparing for public health emergencies by enhancing the capacity of the Medical Reserve Corps.
- **\$3,500** - North Shore-Cape Ann Public Health Emergency Preparedness. Grant originates with National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) to provide training, skill building and educational materials to best prepare Medical Reserve Corps volunteers to support local public health during an emergency.

#### \$305,000 - Substance Abuse Prevention Grants

- **\$80,000** - Healthy Gloucester Collaborative (HGC), Underage Drinking Grant. (Ended June 30, 2015)
- **\$100,000** - HGC, Massachusetts Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative. Addresses the issue of opioid misuse and abuse, and unintentional deaths and non-fatal hospital events associated with opioid poisonings in the communities of Gloucester, Beverly and Danvers.
- **\$100,000** - HGC, Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative. Addresses the issue of substance abuse in the communities of Gloucester, Beverly and Danvers. (Awarded spring of 2015)
- **\$125,000** - HGC, Drug-Free Communities Grant. The funding organizes the Gloucester community around substance abuse prevention through visible enforcement of existing laws, social norming, further training of professionals who come in contact with youth, and limiting access to drug and alcohol substances.

#### \$110,000 - Mass in Motion - Cape Ann

An initiative in partnership with the Community Development Department. The grant funds staff who then facilitate opportunities for Gloucester residents to be more active and access healthier foods. Partners provide mobile fresh food markets and develop school, backyard and community gardens. 2016 will be the final year of this three-year grant contract.

### Health Department Revolving Funds

- Children's Dental Center Revolving Fund supports the Children's Dental Center staff and operating expenses. The current spending limit approved by City Council is \$300,000.
- Vaccine Revolving Fund supports public health vaccination goals to prevent the spread of diseases such as influenza. The current spending limit approved by City Council is \$45,000.
- Tobacco Revolving Account supports a contract employee to conduct compliance checks at establishments permitted to sell tobacco products in Gloucester. The remaining balance in this account is approximately \$2,000.

### The Gloucester Fund

The funds are contributed by the non-profit Needy Meds organization (NeedyMeds.org) as part of a community give-back program to support public health initiatives. Balance is approx. \$3,000.